

Stockton Heath Community Primary School Governors
C/O Chairman, Chris Arden
2 Old Hall Close
Walton
Warrington
WA4 6SZ

7th July 2006

David Whitehead, Chief Executive WBC
Warrington Town Hall
Warrington
Cheshire

Dear Mr Whitehead

Re: Development of Stockton Heath Community Primary School

The Governors met on Thursday evening and expressed concern about the apparent delay in reaching a decision on the fate of the school.

We acknowledge the Councils' attempt to seek views of stakeholders by means of questionnaire but believe that as a means of assessing public opinion it is somewhat flawed. We have been told that completed forms have been returned after photocopying which rather like the planning objections will skew true opinion and may invalidate the numbering process.

The School staff and Governors who work and take responsibility for upkeep of the site continue, as always, to believe that the only option available is to build a new school on the same site than demolish the existing building. The DfES as primary fund providers also regard this, as the preferable option assuming that the council do not have the means to **significantly** fund the shortfall that any other option would entail.

We were extremely disappointed that the Development Control Committee did not inspect the interior of the buildings before they gave judgement on the proposals. It is however interesting to note that the one Councillor who took time to make an appointment with the Head and inspect the interior realised that re-furbishment was not an option for the building. Furthermore Councillor Woodyatt had been in support of retention of the existing building and re-furbishment **until** she inspected the interior!

We fully accept that the Council has to be completely transparent in the processes involved in enhancing a public building but feel that the significant input from the end users has been marginalised in preference to those who 'shout loudest and raise a negative profile in the public domain'. Our initial enquiries from an independent planning consultant raised strategies, which could have been taken. Should the council have considered this as a matter of urgency after refusal in March?

Since the decision in March we have continued to support the school which has maintained a very high standard of educational provision despite the adverse conditions. Staff and parents morale hit an all time low. 11 families intending to place their children at the school withdrew because of the uncertainty of provision. It is very difficult to counteract this negative influence as we have been unable to deliver our promise of new reception and Y1 provision scheduled for completion in 2005. In addition development to improve the conditions of our Y6 provision was planned, hand-in-hand with Reception and Y1 and again not delivered. They currently occupy a building which was condemned a number of years ago!

On a more positive note I'd like to commend the positive commitment of all of our staff team. They have enriched and raised standards of the children's education and continued under direction of a totally committed Headteacher to develop the staffing through TLR's, steer the Enhanced Provision through phases of uncertainty and provide state of the art ICT provision at all levels.

Despite our reasons to celebrate it continues to be a difficult time of uncertainty. Our Senior Management team is weakened with the loss of Deputy Head and Assistant Head who both commence maternity leave imminently. We have massive Health and Safety issues which require significant investment. A chain link fence required replacement as further repairs could not be achieved. A recent H&S audit revealed seriously worn floor coverings, all hot water is delivered at too high a temperature and so the list continues. Our school children will lose out and are continued to be exposed to poor conditions because of a small number of sentimentalists who are more concerned with their outlook, house price or past rather than our children's education. We are compelled to rectify urgent H&S issues but when and where do we stop in the current period of uncertainty?

It is our expectation that the council will set firm timescales for the developments so that we can effectively manage the repercussions of change.

As Governors we are totally committed to our school and firmly believe in our one and only option to re-build. We would be delighted to convey our concerns face to face and urge as many of those who will make decisions to visit our school and see the problems first hand.

In order that I may communicate the proposed process and timescales to the governing body before the end of term I request that you provide me with a written response before Wednesday 19th July.

Yours sincerely

Chris Ardern

Chair of Governors

CC

Ian Marks

Helen Southworth

Stockton Heath Parish Council

Walton Parish Council

Norma Cadwallader

Sheila Woodyatt

Tim Warren